

# The Broken Glass and a Lesson Learned

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It was summer, the heat of the air mingling with the excitement of children playing in the alley. Suddenly, the sound of breaking glass shattered the silence! Their soccer ball had hit our house window, breaking a pane approximately 30 by 40 centimeters. Such incidents were more or less common in summers, but this time, it was to teach me an unforgettable lesson.

I was the top student in school and had won the top prize in the regional mathematics competitions that year. After inquiring about the price of the glass, my father came home and asked me:

"Calculate the price of the glass so the glazier doesn't overcharge us."

The problem seemed simple to me. I took my mother's measuring tape, measured the length and width of the glass, and wrote it down on paper. Then I started calculating.

A few minutes later, my father came home with the glazier. While the glazier was working, my father gestured and asked me, "Have you calculated it?"

I gestured back, "I'm calculating."

A few minutes later, as the glazier was finishing up, my father asked the same question again, and I gave the same answer, "I'm still calculating."

When the work was done, the glazier pulled an old, dirty calculator out of his pocket, entered a few numbers, stated the price, took his money, and left. And me? I was still calculating!

My father looked at me and said, in a tone that still rings in my ears:

"If you can't even calculate this, why are you going to school?"

I felt like the world was crashing down on me. I was the top student in school, I had won a prize in the regional competitions, I expected my father to buy me a gift like a bicycle, but now, not only was there no gift, but I had also heard such a thing. I said sadly:

"Do they teach us glazing in school?"

My father said calmly and firmly:

"I don't know what they teach you in school, but I know that if school can't teach you these simple things, you might as well not go."

This statement preoccupied my mind for a long time.

Summer passed, and schools reopened. A few months later, one of the neighbors came to our house and asked my mother if I could help her son with his math. My mother agreed, and it was arranged that I would tutor him from the next day.

The next day, the boy, who was in the fourth grade of elementary school, came, and I asked him which topic he didn't understand. He said, "Area."

Suddenly, the whole incident came back to my mind: the broken glass, my inability to calculate its price, and my father's words. I didn't show anything, gave a cliché explanation, and asked him to come back the next day.

After he left, I took my mother's measuring tape, measured the same glass again, and this time, I calculated the price in two or three minutes. I realized that the glazier had charged my father almost three times the actual price. But why couldn't I do it that day? This question occupied my mind for a while.

A few years later, at Shahid Beheshti University, we had a course in Principles of Economics. A serious and strict professor gave us a problem and gave us a week to solve it. The problem statement was long and seemed to have a complex answer.

One Friday, I spent five hours, but I didn't reach a satisfactory answer.

On Sunday in class, the professor asked, "Who has solved the problem?"

A student went to the board and started writing. The board was full of formulas and calculations. But before he finished, the professor said, "Wrong."

The student protested, "Professor, it's not finished yet!"

The professor replied firmly, "Wrong."

The next person went to the board, erased it, his clothes turned white from the chalk, and started again. But just like the previous person, before the board was full, the professor said again, "Wrong."

A heavy silence fell over the class. The professor asked:

"Who else has solved it?"

No one said anything.

Suddenly, my friend, who was from Isfahan, said mischievously:

"Professor, Talebzadeh has solved it, he's just shy to say!"

Everything crashed down on me. I said hastily:

"Professor, he's just saying that, I didn't solve it!"

But the professor said seriously:

"Get up and come to the board, write whatever you wrote."

I denied again, but this time he said more forcefully:

"I said come to the board."

I had no choice. I got up and went to the board. Unlike the two previous students, I had nothing to write, except a simple multiplication and its result. Hesitantly, I wrote two numbers on the board. I hadn't even read the result when the professor suddenly slammed his hand on the desk and shouted:

"Bravo! Correct."

I felt like a bucket of ice water had been poured over my head. I was shocked. I just stared.

The two previous students protested:

"Professor! We wrote all this, and then you say this is correct?!"

The professor said calmly:

"I wanted to see if you, who entered this university with excellent grades, know a simple multiplication."

Of course, I later realized that he wasn't referring to the multiplication itself, but to its application. The same thing that my father had said years ago in simpler terms.

Today, on the eve of Nowruz, I have a strange feeling. On one hand, pride in having a father who taught me life lessons beyond school and university. On the other hand, a heavy sadness, because on the third day of the beginning of another spring, he passed away.

Nowruz for me is no longer just the beauty of nature and the joy of renewal... but a reminder of the void of a father who is no longer here to learn from.

## Introduction

The narrative of "The Broken Glass and a Lesson Learned" transcends a mere personal anecdote. It serves as a window into a deeper understanding of learning processes, the parental role in education, and the impact of personal experiences on individual development. This analysis, by examining the pedagogical and psychological aspects of this memory, seeks to uncover and articulate the inherent lessons. The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive and scholarly perspective on the significance of applied learning, the role of a facilitator in the learning process, the emotional impact of experiences on learning, and the importance of motivation and self-efficacy in education.

### Pedagogical Analysis:

#### Applied Learning vs. Abstract Learning:

The anecdote clearly illustrates the dichotomy between abstract learning (mathematical concepts in school) and applied learning (solving real-life problems). Educational systems often emphasize abstract learning, whereas students require practical problem-solving skills to succeed in real-world scenarios.

The protagonist's father, by questioning, "If you cannot calculate this, why attend school?" underscores the importance of applied learning. He emphasizes that the ultimate goal of education is the ability to utilize knowledge in authentic contexts.

#### Significance of Discovery Learning:

The protagonist's experience in calculating the glass's price demonstrates that discovery learning (learning through experience and problem-solving) can be considerably more effective than learning through rote explanations.

When the protagonist was compelled to solve the problem independently, they not only calculated the accurate price but also gained a profound comprehension of mathematics' application in everyday life.

#### The Facilitator's Role in Learning:

The protagonist's father assumes the role of a facilitator who, by posing challenging questions, encourages thought and learning.

Rather than providing direct answers, he guides the protagonist to derive solutions independently. This approach aids the protagonist in developing problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

### Lifelong Learning:

This memory highlights the importance of lifelong learning. The protagonist's father reminds them that education is not confined to school but is an ongoing process that continues throughout life.

### Differences between learning in various environments:

This memory clearly displays the differences between learning in environments such as school and home. The home environment, with its practical teachings, can be a great complement to the schools theoretical teaching.

### Psychological Analysis:

#### Emotional Impact of Learning:

The protagonist's experience with calculating the glass's price demonstrates that learning can be a potent emotional experience.

The feelings of shame and inadequacy experienced by the protagonist motivated them to exert greater effort in the future.

#### Role of Motivation in Learning:

The protagonist's father, by creating a challenge, amplified their motivation to learn.

This memory indicates that intrinsic motivation (the desire to learn for oneself) can be considerably more effective than extrinsic motivation (the desire to learn for rewards or to avoid punishment).

#### Importance of Self-Efficacy:

When the protagonist successfully solved the problem, their sense of self-efficacy (belief in one's ability to perform a task successfully) increased.

This sense of self-efficacy aided them in facing future challenges.

#### Impact of Memories on Learning:

This memory illustrates that memories can have a profound impact on learning.

The protagonist's experience with calculating the glass's price was an enduring memory that guided them throughout their life.

#### Importance of emotional intelligence in education:

The father's way of dealing with his child, provides an important lesson about the importance of emotional intelligence in education. Even though he is not happy with his child's performance, he talks to him with a calm and firm tone and tries to educate him indirectly.

Conclusion:

"The Broken Glass and a Lesson Learned" is not merely a personal story but a salient example of the importance of applied learning and the profound impact of life experiences on individual growth. This analysis demonstrated how a seemingly simple situation can transform into a valuable lesson. Lessons concerning the significance of discovery learning, the facilitator's role in learning, the emotional impact of experiences on learning, and the importance of motivation and self-efficacy. This memory reminds us that education is not confined to school but is an ongoing process that continues throughout life.

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